Soil – Breaking Ground Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

<http://whyfiles.org/199_soil>

Answer the following questions using the four pages available at the website above.

1. Why is soil so important?
2. What are some examples of what happens when we damage our soil?
3. It seems that humans don’t learn very quickly. Fill in the following chart about civilizations on Easter Island around 1600 AD, in Iceland around 900 AD, and in the Midwestern United States in the 1930s.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Easter Island | Iceland | Midwestern US |
| The new settlers cleared the… | forests |  |  |
| In order to raise |  |  | wheat |
| Until what happened? |  |  |  |
| Which finally resulted in what happening? |  |  |  |

1. What was the “Green Revolution”?
2. From 1945 to 2002, what happened to the amount of corn produced per acre on US farms?
3. And yet, what is still the biggest problem with soil?
4. Erosion is caused by w\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and w\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. How much erosion is caused by each?
5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_% of the world’s farmland has become unusable in the last 40 years, due to erosion.
6. Why is it good farming practice to put more than one crop on a field?
7. What are four of the “sustainable” agriculture practices described?
8. One future practice is “no-till” farming (or conservation tillage.) What is it and why does it work?
9. What is the difference between an “annual” crop and a “perennial” crop? (you may have to look these up elsewhere for a clear explanation)
10. Why are perennial crops a good idea?
11. What is the brown cloud in the picture and where is it coming from?